

City Council Budget Hearing – September 30, 2021

Remarks – Commissioner Mark Kelly

Thank you, Chairman Dowell and Council members for the opportunity to discuss the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). 2021 has been another unprecedented and very difficult year, but despite the global pandemic and a significant reduction in this current year's budget, DCASE has worked to increase our support to the cultural community through new and innovative grant programs, pushed culture out into all 77 neighborhoods in authentic and sustainable ways, embedded artists into city programs and processes, and began the hard work of evaluating our portfolio and the structures that support our work to better position DCASE for its future.

Guided by the leadership of Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, my team and I have enjoyed working with you and the rest of City Council on a wide range of these projects and initiatives as we lifted-up Chicago's creative sector – always through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens – and positioned the arts to uniquely aid in Chicago's recovery efforts.

I'm pleased to share an overview of our accomplishments – a snapshot of DCASE, by the numbers:

- Announced “Arts77,” a citywide arts recovery and reopening plan for all of Chicago's 77 community areas, representing an **initial investment of over \$60M** from the Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events, the Chicago Park District, other city agencies and private funding to support local artists and organizations
- Dedicated **over \$20M to support public art projects** through new investments like the Capital Plan, aviation expansion projects, and the Chicago Monuments Project
- **Expanded investment in neighborhoods from \$4M to \$14M** with new grant programs and reimagined events such as Artist Response Program, Taste-To-GO, House City, and Neighborhood Blues that directly supported artists and communities, with a particular focus on the south and west sides
- Placed a spotlight on Chicago's music landscape – one of the most influential and dynamic musical sectors on the globe – highlighting its legacy, expanding its audience, and strengthening the sector as we celebrated the Year of Chicago Music and **provided the local music community with over \$5M in direct support**
- **Increased Cultural Grants budget from \$2.7M to \$7.3M**, including philanthropic support and Coronavirus Relief Funds, while granting over 500 grants across 9 programs, including the new Chicago Presents and Professional Development Provider Programs, among others
- Centered racial equity in all of our programs and processes which positively impacted diversity hiring in 2021 (**100% of new employees are BIPOC**), made our grantees more reflective of the city of Chicago (**60% of Individual Artists Program grantees are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)**) as compared to 38% in 2016, and grants were **awarded to artists and arts organizations in 50 wards** in 2021 as compared to 35 in 2016), resulted in new and expanded cultural programs as we stive towards a more equitable distribution of funds across the city

- Partnered with CDOT and BACP to extend the Expanded Outdoor Dining initiative which has played an important role in the vibrancy of our streets and neighborhoods with almost **300 restaurants and establishments** across the city participating and worked closely with Aldermen and city agencies to review and permit **almost 400 special event applications** since we resumed issuing permits in June 2021
- As part of the COVID-19 Recovery Task Force recommendations, led the city's efforts to make Chicago a highly desirable and welcoming destination for film and television producers post-pandemic which will **result in over \$750M in revenue that generates over 20,000 local jobs** while working closely with Aldermen to create deconfliction plans that help to offset the impact of filming in communities
- Played a leading role in the reopening and recovery of the City's arts and culture sectors by providing essential relief funds - including **the recently announced \$2.3M Artist Relief Program** - convening arts and culture leaders around best practices, and positioning Chicago's cultural vitality as a driving force in our economic recovery
- **Brought in \$20M in additional funds and resources** for public art, facilities and security, programming, and recovery and reopening efforts to supplement the 50% cut to our 2021 budget

In 2022, DCASE and the City of Chicago's arts community and constituents will see a transformative influx of resources. For the first time in the Department's history, \$10M from the corporate budget will be dedicated to supporting arts and culture, which increases the Cultural Grants budget from \$2.7M to \$12.7M. Over the next two years, an additional \$16M for Cultural Grants will come from ARP funding to support artist relief for artists and organizations and creative place-making grants. This represents a \$26M investment in our arts and culture community. With these additional funds, plus our operating budget being restored to 90% of pre-pandemic levels, and staffing levels restored, DCASE is positioned to better address new and emerging strategic directions and the needs of the cultural community. Priorities include:

- A continued commitment for equity as the driving force in our work, impacting our organization from improved systems, more diverse staffing, and expanded reach of our programs and services
- A priority to expand access and participation in the arts citywide and better support neighborhood cultural vitality
- A focus on cultural grants and resources as a planning tool to provide equitable support to the cultural landscape
- An increased investment in public art as we employ artists and creative skilled workers and place a spotlight on public art as a defining characteristic of our city
- Support for creative and professional workforce development as an important component of our portfolio
- A new direction for Chicago's cultural policy in which the arts are embedded in initiatives and strategies across City government

Thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.